[GB] ITC consults on the licensing of digital terrestrial television

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At the end of May, the Independent Television Commission (ITC) launched the first stage of a public consultation on the licensing of digital terrestrial television. Under the Broadcasting Bill, currently before Parliament, the ITC will be responsible for regulating and licensing digital television in the U.K. The framework established in the Bill is a two tier process under which the carriers of the services, the multiplex operators, are licensed separately from the programme and additional services providers.

The first stage of consultation concerns the multiplex operators, for which the ITC is now beginning to draft licences and accompanying 'Invitation to Apply'. They reflect the criteria for the advertisement and award of licences laid down in the Bill. Supplementary documents are also being drawn up which relate to technical standards and transmission coverage. These will be followed shortly by the publication of draft documents concerning the services carried on the multiplexes. Guidance is also sought on a number of issues including the manner in which multiplexes could be 'bundled' for advertisement, the timetable for the start and roll out of services, and the requirement for applicants to promote the take up of equipment.

Furthermore, the ITC announced a reorganisation in order to cope with their new responsibilities as described above.

ITC Note for Applicants on Coverage for Digital Television, May 1996; ITC Guidance Note on Picture Quality in Digital Television, May 1996; ITC Digital Technical Performance Code, May 1996; ITC Note for Applicants on Transmission Standards for Digital Terrestrial Television Broadcasting, May 1996; Invitation to Apply for Multiplex Service Licenses, 22 May 1996.

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